

Having described the invention, the following is claimed:

1. In a washer including a washing chamber and an intake assembly having a first blower, a pressure equalization system operable to maintain an equalized pressure in the washing chamber, said pressure equalization system comprising:

a first gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said first gate element disposed between said first blower and said washing chamber; and

a second gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said second gate element disposed between said first blower and said first gate element,

wherein said first gate element and said second gate element are movable to the open position in response to a negative pressure condition in said washing chamber to increase the pressure therein.

2. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said first and second gate elements are pressure-actuated flap valves.

3. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said intake assembly includes a first chamber disposed between said first blower and said first gate element, said second gate element allowing air from the environment surrounding the washer to enter the first chamber, in the open position.

4. The pressure equalization system of claim 3, wherein a heating element is disposed in said first chamber to heat air received therein.

5. The pressure equalization system of claim 3, wherein a filter element is disposed in said first chamber to filter air before the air passes into said washing chamber.

6. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said first gate element moves to the open position when said first blower is activated.

7. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said pressure equalization system includes a third gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said third gate element movable to the open position when there is a positive pressure condition inside said washing chamber, to allow fluid to exit said washing chamber.
8. The pressure equalization system of claim 7, wherein said third gate element is a mechanically-operated flap valve.
9. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said washer includes an exhaust assembly for exhausting fluids from said washing chamber, said exhaust assembly including a second blower, wherein said third gate element is disposed between said washing chamber and the second blower.
10. The pressure equalization system of claim 9, wherein said exhaust assembly includes an exhaust chamber and a fourth gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said fourth gate element moving to the open position in response to a negative pressure condition in said exhaust chamber.
11. The pressure equalization system of claim 10, wherein said fourth gate element is a pressure-actuated flap valve.
12. The pressure equalization system of claim 9, wherein said exhaust assembly comprises an exhaust chamber including an opening for drawing fluid therein to prevent a negative pressure condition in said exhaust chamber.
13. The pressure equalization system of claim 1, wherein said washer includes a recirculation pump having a frequency variator that gradually increases pump speed from a slow pump speed to a nominal pump speed, upon activation of the recirculation pump.